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INTERROGATION OF FRANZ WEISSER, DR. PHIL STUDIENASSESSOR OF ANGLO-AMERICAN SECTION OF OKW/CHI.

Attached is a report of the interrogation of Dr. FRANZ WEISSER, formerly of the Anglo-American Section of OKW/Chi. The interrogation was conducted by MARY C. LANE, 1st Lt., Sig. C, A.S.A. EUROPE at AUGSBURG, 17th-18th October, 1946.

2. The interrogation was conducted in English, WEISSER speaking the language fluently, and WEISSER's exact wording has been retained.

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Declassified by D. Janosek,
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Interrogation of FRANZ WEISSER, Dr. Phil.
Studienassessor, former member
of Anglo-American Section
OKW/Chi.

Conducted at Augsburg 17-18 October, 1946
By MARY C. LANE, 1st Lt. Sig C.
Army Security Agency Europe.

1. What have been your activities since April, 1945?

I was discharged from the German Army in June, 1945 at Goetting near Bad Aibling. After that I stayed in Bruckmuehl as a private tutor and applied for a position in the Ausburg Oberschule. On 1 May I came to the Oberschule at Augsburg as a teacher of Latin, German and French. At present I teach in the morning and in the afternoon do private tutoring. My address is Augsburg, Johann Roesle Strasse 9 bei Hoegg. My wife is in Berlin, address Berlin/Friedrichsfelde, Waldesseestrasse 40 (Russian district); my daughter aged 21 is in Bruchmuehl.

2. When did you join OKW/Chi?

I joined OKW/Chi in 1936. I had prepared to be a school teacher, but could not get a position because I was not a Nazi party member. Therefore, I applied to OKW and after a brief period of training entered the Anglo-American Section under Nikolai Rohen.

3. Give an account of your education and activities prior to your joining OKW/Chi.

I was born 6 February, 1901 in Hohensalza, Posen, and attended the schools in Hohensalza. When Posen was ceded to Poland after the last war, I went to Hamburg and entered the export and import branch where I worked until 1928. In 1923 I married Berta Jaehn of Hamburg, and have one daughter now aged 21. Since I had always wished to become a school teacher, I went to the University of Hamburg and passed the doctoral examinations while maintaining my wife and child. I passed the first examinations in 1934 and the second in 1936 but could not get a job because I was not a Nazi. Therefore I applied to OKW/Chi for a position.

4. How large was OKW/Chi in 1936, in 1945? How large was Rohen's section in 1936, in 1945?

In 1936, OKW/Chi had about 50 men, at the end of the war, 350. Its increase was due principally to the machine systems. Rohen's section, when I entered, consisted of about 6 men, at the end of the war, 35. The size however, did not correspond to the work done. Practical decipherment was carried on by about 5 men.

5. What American and British codes were read by OKW/Chi during the period of the war? In your account name and describe which codes were solved, which compromised, by whom, and when.

6. American Systems.

a) Military Intelligence Code.

In the winter 1941-1942, OKW/Chi got from Japan a copy of the

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Military Intelligence Code, and at the same time a courier luggage was intercepted in the Balkans which contained the enciphering tables. So work could be started, and the deciphered news gave important information about the North African theatre. (The code was used by the Military Attache in Cairo). After some weeks, new tables came into force, and the decipherment took place as follows:

As far as I can remember, there were 10 tables, 5 of which were reciprocal. It was a one-letter system, each table covering the material for 20 letters, i.e. 4 subsequent code words. For each table, there were five indicators. The first problem was to put the indicators into order. This was solved by a statistics of about the 20 first words of every telegram (at about this spot a new indicator came into force which however, being enciphered, was not recognisable. After the material had thus been put into order, the very work of enciphering could begin. This was rather easy at first, because we had some telegrams from Baghdad with stereotypic beginnings (if I remember right: "From Bullivant to Maxwell"). After the first table had thus been solved, owing to the reciprocal system also the second table was solved. The indicator of the second phase of the telegrams beginning by the first or second table now being deciphered, the material for the following tables was increased. For the next tables stereotypic beginnings were hardly necessary on account of the fact that in many cases the continuation of the text could easily be concluded, especially if the change of an indicator took place in the midst of a spelled word. For instance, if the last word of the first indicator was ir, the first word of the second table had to be an. Thus we needed at the beginning about 100 telegrams for the solution of a system, which meant that about two weeks after the introduction of a new system all tables were solved. Later on we had no more stereotypic beginnings, but trained by practice, we did not need them any more, so that about 70 telegrams were sufficient to solve a system. At the time of the Rommel offensives, the telegrams thus encyphered (they contained exact data about strength, losses, location) were surely of highest importance to the High Command (although the work was never appreciated) and perhaps it is no chance that the defeat of El Alamein coincided with the fact that the Military Attache at Cairo stopped using this code. As we were informed later, our activity was compromised by the Italians. The system continued to be used in the Baghdad and Teheran traffic, and we still continued to solve the tables, although the work got harder and harder, because the material decreased considerably so that we were forced to make statistics throughout a telegram which had a special difficulty as you never knew the phases. And yet, on the other hand, by this method it was possible to solve indicators in the middle of telegrams. Thus we succeeded in solving also the last system covering only about 50 telegrams, but the news contained therein was of no importance after El Alamein. Whether afterwards the code was used but with a new kind of system was never found out. It was suggested that the code was replaced by strip cyphers.

b) Military ? Code.

I do not remember the name. The system was of the same kind as the Military Intelligence Code (the one covering European, the other non-European countries). The code and the tables were compromised in the same way as the Military Intelligence Code. The news was not of such importance as to influence the course of the war.

c) C-1: a code of about 50,000 words enciphered by tables (two 2-letter and one 1-letter. -

The name of the code was, I believe, C-1. The code was solved by

the Auswaertiges Amt, the tables subsequently solved by OKW/Chi, the last time in the winter of 1943-1944 in the traffic of Spain and Switzerland (the news dealing principally with the Black List). The code seems to have been abandoned.

d) A-1: a code of about 160,000 words enciphered by one letter tables.

The code was compromised by Japan and the tables solved by OKW/Chi.

e) Gray Code.

The code had been worked on from the beginning and was completely deciphered by 1936.

f) Brown Code.

Work was started immediately after the introduction in collaboration with the Auswaertiges Amt with the result that the code was nearly solved when in May, 1941, we got a copy from the Japanese. This was the one code which justified the existance of the Anglo-American department in the last phase of the war.

g) Strip Cipher.

After the Marine Bureau (Franke) had solved a system which was, (although the strip system was in the beginning rather primitive) a remarkable feat because it was a new kind of encypherment which had at first to be recognised, in May 1941 a log of strips covering all European traffics came in from Japan. After the introduction of the new system, solution work set in on a big scale in OKW/Chi by Huettenhain and Dr. Franz, and in the Auswaertiges Amt by Kunze, rather in rivalry than collaboration. After several months work, the Auswaertiges Amt succeeded in solving the system with the aid of Hollerith machines. Work for the next system was continued on a still bigger scale but without any success. From the Anglo-American department, Herr Helmut SCHULZ worked as liaison. He could have pushed the work forward, but he was hampered by the incapacity and vanity of Dr. FRANZ. A big help would have been Herr VOEGELE who had solved a similar system and who volunteered collaboration, which was refused as he was not considered competent, not being an academician. The small Finnish staff under Colonel HALLAMAA also collaborated quite effectively giving hints. Thus it found out that the systems used in different countries after some time emerged again in other countries. Later on, the strip system was applied in such a complicated way that work became hopeless. It was not abandoned, however, until the last phase of the war.

7. British Systems.

a) Interdepartmental.

The code book was found in Norway, and work was started by the Luftwaffe under VOEGELE. OKW/Chi collaborated with the Luftwaffe, but only to a small extent, especially as the solution of the figure book took months, and the news contained in the telegrams was not only antiquated, but also of not much interest. The solution required quite a lot of telegrams, and you could break in by stereotypic beginnings, which were furnished generously by the Navy especially. The work was done by writing the respective telegrams one below the other and bringing them into relation to each other. At first 5 to 7 telegrams were necessary for this work, but later on two telegrams were sufficient. Provided there was material enough, with steady work the whole figure book could be solved.

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b) 4-letter code, not enciphered (Irodrome).

This code (R. Code) which was replaced every four years was in combination with the American Gray Code the standard work of the Anglo-American department until the outbreak of the war. Every time it was replaced, it was solved. The last copy was found in BERGEN.

c) Government Telegraph Code.

This code was at hand in various original copies, the last of which was found, I believe, at SALONIKI.

8. What work on cipher machines was done by OKW/Chi and by whom ?

Work on cipher machines was done by HUETTENHAIN's section. This section had practical results in the Japanese system (a type of raster system, perhaps enciphered), which was solved with the aid of machines. This system was solved by Professor WEBER of HUETTENHAIN's section. What else they worked on, I do not know, but they had no results in anything else. They worked with a large staff on strip cypher.

9. Did you ever hear of Typex ?

Yes, I have heard of it as Type X, but I can only make very vague statements about it. VOEGELE of the Luftwaffe knew about Type X, and, of course, HUETTENHAIN knew about it also. VOEGELE had been in India and some said he had worked with Indian "magic" and was able to "look through matters" as if by magic. Somewhere there must have been a copy of Type X machine, either in OKW/Chi or the Luftwaffe, but I do not know anything about it. This machine was captured at DUNKIRK but it came to the proper section only a year later because no one had known what to do with it. I do not know whether it had all its parts, but this I do know for certain, that this system was never solved and that OKW/Chi never worked on it.

Only one man, VOEGELE, said this type of machine could be solved. He worked on this type and was always very optimistic. I was the man of OKW/Chi who had to contact VOEGELE on such matters. HUETTENHAIN and VOEGELE did not work on this machine system together. If it had been worked on at OKW/Chi, I would have known it because I always insisted that this type of machine should be worked on because I saw that this type of work would lead to something important if solved and that HUETTENHAIN with a very large staff was working on only theoretical matters which were of no importance.

10. Did you ever hear of the "big American machine" ?

Never. I never have seen an American machine. As far as I know, nobody knew anything about the American machines. We always suspected that the Americans were using the Hagelin machines but I never saw an American machine.

HUETTENHAIN had a system to distinguish strip systems from machine systems by letter statistics. For instance, there had to be an outstanding frequency of one letter - which letter did not matter. This made the distinction between strip systems and the machines but personally I was never certain that this system worked exactly.

11. Can you describe the solution of the American Strip System ?

Once I spoke with KUNZE, HUETTENHAIN and VOEGELE about the solution of the American strip system, but as I did not work on it myself, I cannot remember the details of the solution.

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12. What do you know about the German systems of encipherment ?

I know of the Enigma.. An expert in German machines was MENZER.

13. Do you know anything about German teleprinters ?

Nothing whatever. This was another department of OKW/Chi.

14. What was the relation of OKW/Chi to the Abwehr ?

In the first years, we were absolutely dependent upon the Abwehr, but in later years we tended more to OKH/In 7. The chief of In 7 and of the WNV (Wehrmachtnachrichtenverbindung) was identical in later years. The command was thus :

WFSt was a very small staff which existed mainly on paper. In technical matters, OKW/Chi was subordinated to In 7, owing to the fact that the chiefs were the same. This state of affairs was never quite clear, and this was because OKW had no troops under its command; on paper OKW was over the Army, Navy and Luftwaffe, but in fact it had nothing to say because it had no troops.

15. What is your opinion of other German cryptologic organisations ?

a) Auswaertiges Amt: The Foreign Office worked on the same material as the OKW/Chi and OKW/Chi collaborated intensely with them but the leading men such as SCHLUETTER and NEUSCHKE were antiquated. KUNZE of the Foreign Office was a capable man and his section solved the strip cypher. At the end, they worked nearly with their whole staff on the strip cypher and in the other countries did little of any importance.

b) Forschungsamt: The Forschungsamt had a small staff, all of the old school and they did nothing of importance with machine ciphers.

c) OKM/4 SKL III: The Navy was, I think, efficient, but what they solved after the introduction of the machines must have also been nothing.

d) Luftwaffe: In the Luftwaffe, VOEGELE was the outstanding man. VOEGELE lived an irregular life but he was a hard worker notwithstanding. He was in my opinion better than HUETTENHAIN because he had the real feeling for this matter. The Foreign Office and OKW/Chi had many professors of the academic type whereas VOEGELE of the Luftwaffe had none but worked alone. He had a staff of 70 to 100 people but the outstanding man was VOEGELE, who was not only head of the organisation but who actually did the work himself. This was in contrast to FENNER and HUETTENHAIN, both of whom had the organisation but who did nothing themselves. They had men under them who actually did the work.

e) OKH/In 7: In the winter 1941-1942 OKH/In 7 had success with Russian systems, and could follow the Russians. At the time of the Russian offensive, OKW/Chi placed its Russian staff at the disposal of In 7 and the diplomatic matters were not worked on at that time. In 7 had its organisation scattered about Europe, and so I do not know exactly about its people or its successes. STEINBERG who came from In 7 to OKW/Chi in 1943 would know exactly about these matters. He was last in the camp at BAD AIBLING, as I heard.

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16. What do you know of liaison with other European cryptologic organisations ?

a) Italy: Italy had a large staff but it lived principally by theft. OKW/Chi and the Italian bureau collaborated but the one mistrusted the other and therefore the really important things were withheld on both sides.

b) Finland: The Finns had a small but officient staff. They were well trained in the modern sense of cryptology. For their size and considering their modest means, they were better than OKW/Chi. Helmut SCHULZ was once in Finland and knows the staff by name and person. The Finns gave important hints for solving the strip cipher and this was the reason that SCHULZ went to Finland.

c) Hungary: The Hungarians were unimportant. The staff was very small and the work like to nothing.

d) Austria: The Austrians were very good, especially in the Balkan systems. SEIFERT, LOCKER, MILOVIC came to the German bureaux from Austria.

Bulgaria and Spain had no cryptologic staff.

e) Japan: About Japan I can only guess from correspondence with them that they had a staff but did not know how to work. They lived, like the Italians, mainly by theft. The Japanese were always frank with us, whereas the Italians always double-crossed us. I have seen HAYASHI and knew that he brought codes, etc., to OKW/Chi but this work was carried on through FENNER.

17. What do you know about the English and United States cryptologic organisations ?

About the English cryptologic bureau in modern times I know nothing. I have read Yardley's Black Chamber in the American edition but know nothing more. Whatever we knew about history of cryptography was told us by FENNER.

18. Have you ever heard of a public European cryptologic organisation ?

No, never. As a member of the export and import business, I already before 1936 had invented a table system for condensing telegrams which was very effective. This was used by the firm Alfred ZUSSMAN in HAMBURG. It was a private code and was not registered since at that time one did not have to register codes. Later it was forbidden.

19. What is your opinion of the effectiveness of OKW/Chi ?

To answer this, one must distinguish between two methods of encipherment. In the old method, OKW/Chi was very effective. In the new method of machine encipherment, OKW/Chi had very little success. It is my opinion that the solution of the new systems was hampered by the bureaucracy and the too academical point of view which was held by FENNER and HUETTENHAIN. FENNER himself had not attended a university, and that perhaps accounts for his too high opinion of an academician like HUETTENHAIN... Good men who were not academicians such as MENZER could not succeed at OKW/Chi for this reason.

A lack of real cooperation among all the German cryptologic organizations greatly hampered the effectiveness of each one. It is my opinion that all the organizations should have been gathered into one, but this was not possible because of the personal ambition of the head

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of each. In spite of the close collaboration with the Foreign Office, only in the last year was the work not duplicated. What the other organizations were doing, no one knew since every organization surrounded itself with secrecy.

Even within OKW/Chi itself, there was no collaboration between sections. I always suggested that the chiefs of the special departments should give out details of their work which would be profitable but this suggestion was never accepted. This was a notable fault within OKW/Chi.

However, it should be stated that in inventing and building ~~Hilfsgeraete~~ OKW/Chi was very successful.

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20. What do you know about the Hilfsgeraete ?

I have seen the Hilfsgeraete working in a big hall in OKW/Chi, but I cannot remember how they worked. I have also seen the Hollerith machines in the Auswaertiges Amt and OKW/Chi used these Hollerith machines for its own work. OKW/Chi did the work for the Auswaertiges Amt which required the use of Hilfsgeraete.

21. Where are the Hilfsgeraete now ?

OKW/Chi machines and documents were divided into two classes: dispensable and indispensable. Dispensable documents and machinery were moved to JUETERBORG and from there to the Schliersee at the end of 1944 and the beginning of 1945. In Schliersee they were thrown by order of HOEFFNER into the lake all together. I was there and know this for certain. It would not be worth while looking for these dispensable documents.

Indespensable documents and machinery were evacuated together with the personnel to HALLE/SAALE and then to WERFEN where they were destroyed under the eyes of American troops of the 3rd Army, I believe. After the surrender, American troops came past the train where OKW/Chi personnel were and did not disturb it. We made a large fire and destroyed the documents after the surrender. About the machinery, I do not know, but ADLER of the Japanese section who is now an interpreter in MUNICH would know. It is possible that the machines were hidden in the woods.

22. What is your opinion of the following people ?

a) Lt. Gen. GIESLER: Lt. Gen. GIESLER know nothing about anything. I remember that he once said that he had obtained his post as head of OKW because he knew how to obey. This was typical of the man. He made himself ridiculous with Nazi speeches, particularly at HALLE in the last days of the war when he stated that OKW/Chi was the "intellectual clique" and was composed of "defaitists" and that it was the fault of these men that the war had not been won earlier. He was convinced that Germany would win the war, even in the very last phases. He also stated "as long as we live, we shall stay in BERLIN". Next day we began to move. He was kind-natured but stupid; an upholder of authority, stout, and his expression was without intelligence. He had short hair, a la Hindenburg. He maintained an important air to cover his lack of understanding. He was a confirmed Nazi and worse than any Gauleiter.

b) THIEL, FELGIEBEL: Both were competent men of the agreeable Prussian type officer. It was typical of the Nazis that they got rid of the competent men, both being hanged after the attempt of 20th July, 1944.

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c) KETTLER: A typical troop leader and one who despised the intellectuals. He was not in the right position, though he may have been a good man in his own sphere, presumably on the battle front.

d) HOELFNER: A failure in every activity. It was typical of the man that at the end of the war, when we were at SCHLIERSEE he ordered the others to go to WERFEN to join the main part of OKW/Chi, and himself with a carload of chocolate and cigarettes disappeared. This was our leader !

e) FENNER: A very difficult character. He knew the fundamentals of the old school cryptography, and was a good organiser. Some say he was an intriguer. To people who he liked he was frank and kind, to others he was very cunning - a diplomat. FENNER was very susceptible to flattery and a pleasant way. A confirmed Protestant and anti-Nazi. When I joined OKW/Chi, FENNER told me that the official greeting might be Heil HITLER, but that in OKW/Chi only "Good Morning" was used. FENNER had much trouble because he was an anti-Nazi.

f) ROHEN: ROHEN was a man of very shy and timid nature. He had been last in the Anglo-American section, but when the others left for the Forschungsamt in 1933, ROHEN became head because he was the only one left. The Forschungsamt did not take him because he was incompetent. He had heart trouble and was sick. It was his wish to be an engine driver and he came into OKW/Chi only by chance. He is quite unintellectual, a man without any interests, and an enemy of FENNER. He and FENNER lived in the same house for years together but did not speak a word to each other.

g) DENKER, Dr: DENKER cannot say anything of importance because he never worked on any code and did not bother about organisation. He was a linguist and nothing more. He is a tragic figure because although he belonged to the Nazi party, he was not a Nazi in feeling. He was a typical "intellectual" man.

h) WENDLAND: WENDLAND worked exclusively in the transposition field of Jugoslav traffic and in this field was a very fine expert. A reliable character.

i) SEIFERT: A sick man, but one who knew the fundaments of cryptology better than FENNER. SEIFERT was a defaitist and a pessimist by nature. His two sons and wife were dead.

j) SCHAEDEL: A good propagandist for his own person. Before SCHAEDEL assumed charge of the archives, a man named DOBBLIN was in charge. He was dismissed and SCHAEDEL built up the archives on a modern style but in reality they were the same. SCHAEDEL went every day to GUDDLER and made a report on the news. He had no special knowledge but collected the material and went to GUDDLER with it. SCHAEDEL was a smart business man who built up his own position. By profession he was an archaeologist.

k) von KALCKSTEIN: A Junker of the old school. Every department gave von KALCKSTEIN translations and he handed them to a department of the General Staff. His job was quite unimportant but because he was an officer he had a certain reputation.

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23. From whom of your former associates have you heard since the end of the war or with whom have you been in contact ?

I have had one letter from SIEGFRIED TOST, BERLIN, WILMERSDORF/ KONSTANZERSTRASSE 49 III bei SURMAN who is a former member of ROHEN's section. This man can give the address of Dr. SCHULTZE, a member of HUETTENHAIN's section. I received this letter on 17th October, 1946, the first I have had from him.

I have heard from no others and have had no contact with anyone of the former colleagues except some girls of my own staff such as secretaries. I wrote FENNER a postcard at HANGELSBERG/SIBEE but received no answer.

24. Are you interested in any further work of a cryptographic nature ?

I am not a mathematician and modern cryptology need mathematicians and technicians. Therefore I am not qualified. I had already decided that I would not continue in this profession because I saw no future in it, and I wanted to become a school teacher. I joined OKW/Chi only because I could not hold a school position because I was not a Nazi.

25. Do you think that any of your former colleagues might continue their work in cryptology ?

Only FENNER. WENDLAND would never do so, nor HUETTENHAIN. HUETTENHAIN is not an enterprising man. MENZER and SCHULZ are not ambitious but FENNER is and has already expressed himself as willing to work with the Americans against the Russians. FENNER is an organiser and an anti-Bolshevist as well as an anti-Nazi.